REMARKS

The present remarks are in response to the Office Action dated April 11, 2006. Claims 8-10, 39-41, and 62-99 are now present in this case. No claims have been amended in the present response. However, all claims are included herewith for the Examiner's convenience. New claims 96-99 are added.

Claims 8-10, 39-41, and 62-95 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 5,689,550 to Garson et al. The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration. Although Garson et al. is directed to a messaging network, there are significant structural and functional differences between the system disclosed in Garson et al. and that recited in the rejected claims.

With respect to claim 39, the Office Action states that Garson et al. discloses the master platform configured to respond to its messaging platform that sends a response message to the master platform with the response message being sent by each messaging platform at a selected interval. (See Office Action, page 3.) This is incorrect. The Office Action cites Garson et al. at column 11, lines 1-20 for teaching a master platform configured to respond to a messaging platform that sends a response message and cites Garson et al., at column 7, lines 35-52 as disclosing messaging platforms sending a response message at a selected interval. The cited passage at column 11, lines 1-20 does not teach or suggest a master platform responding to each messaging platform. The cited section of Garson et al. describes the ability of a network management system (NMS) to monitor performance of a network interface box (NIB). This includes the ability to monitor alarms or review alarm history from all NIBs as well as selecting a specific NIB to monitor. Nothing in Garson et al. suggests that this monitor process involves the master platform responding to a message from each messaging platform on the messaging network that sends a response message to the master platform.

Furthermore, the Office Action cites Garson et al., at column 7, lines 35-52 as teaching the messaging platform sending a message at a selected interval. This is incorrect. The only mention of any time at all in column 7, lines 35-52, is a description of a timer module "to inform the Call Server when a predetermined time interval has passed." There is no teaching or even suggestion that the time interval is used by a

messaging platform to send a message. The only function of the timer module described in Garson et al. is to activate periodic storage of archival records. (See column 16, lines 40-52, and claim 16.) Garson et al. does not teach or suggest the messaging platform sending messages to a master platform at predetermined intervals nor the master platform responding to the receipt of messages from the messaging platforms.

Finally, the Office Action asserts that Garson et al. teaches sending a query message to a messaging platform on the network that fails to send a response message to the master platform within the selected interval. The cited section of Garson et al., column 9, lines 24-36, do not suggest such a process. The cited section of Garson describes the function of a call server. Among the many functions of the call server are maintaining system status and error logs as well as reporting system status. However, nothing in Garson et al. suggests that the messaging platform sends a message at periodic intervals (see discussion above) nor does the cited section of Garson et al. suggest the transmission of a query message to a messaging platform that fails to send a response message within the selected interval, as recited in claim 39. For these reasons, among others, claim 39 is clearly allowable over Garson et al. Claims 40 and 41 are also allowable in view of the fact that they depend from claim 39, and further in view of the recitation in each of those claims.

Claim 8 is a method claim for maintaining a messaging network. As described above with respect to claim 39, Garson et al. does not teach or suggest responding to each of a plurality of messaging platforms that sends a response message to the master platform with the response message being sent at a selected interval defined in the messaging platform entry nor sending a query message to a selected one of the plurality of messaging platforms that fails to send a response message to the master platform within the selected interval. For at least these reasons, claim 8 is clearly allowable over Garson et al. Claims 9 and 10 are also allowable in view of the fact that they depend from claim 8, and further in view of the recitation in each of those claims.

Claim 62 is directed to a system for maintaining a messaging network and recites *inter alia* a master device "capable of responding to each messaging device on the messaging network that sends a first message type within a predetermined time

interval." As noted above with respect to claim 39, Garson et al. does not teach or suggest any messaging network that sends any messaging type within a predetermined interval. The timer described in Garson et al. at column 7 is used for determining a time interval at which data should be stored in an archival database. This is unrelated to sending a first message type within a predetermined interval, as recited in claim 62. For this reason, among others, claim 62 is clearly allowable over Garson et al. Claims 63-71 are also allowable in view of the fact that they depend from 62, and further in view of the recitation in each of those claims.

Claim 72 is directed to a method for providing information to a subscriber and recites *inter alia* "sending a request for information to a master platform in response to the service information, the master platform responding to the request by requesting information from an information source, the information corresponding to the service information," as well as receiving the requested information and "converting the received information to a delivery format specified in the service information." While Garson et al. does generally disclose the conversion of delivery format from one format to another, this is merely a message conversion routine for a message that is sent to a destination mailbox. The destination mailbox in Garson et al. has not requested information from an information source, but merely receives messages as transmitted from a message source. For this reason alone, claim 72 is clearly allowable over Garson et al. Claims 73-77 are also allowable in view of the fact that they depend from claim 72, and further in view of the recitation in each of those claims.

Claim 78 is a method claim for providing information to a subscriber on a messaging system. Claim 78 recites *inter alia* requesting information from an information source based on the received service information, receiving the requested information from the information source and "converting the received information to a delivery format specified in the received service information if the requested information from the information source is received in a format other than the specified delivery format." As discussed above with respect to claim 72, the destination mailbox in Garson et al. does not request information but simply receives messages addressed to it. Accordingly, claim 78 is clearly allowable over Garson et al. Claims 79-83 are also allowable in view of the fact that they depend from claim 78, and further in view of the recitation in each of those claims.

Claim 84 is a system claim that recites *inter alia* "the communication module being further configured to communicate with an information source in response to the request for information and to transmit the request for information thereto." The messaging computer is further configured "to respond to any information received from the information source by converting the received information to have a delivery format corresponding to a delivery format specified in the service information." As discussed above with respect to claim 78, Garson et al. does not teach or suggest communicating with an information source in response to a request for information and transmitting the request for information thereto. For at least this reason, claim 84 is allowable over Garson et al. Claims 85-91 are also allowable in view of the fact that they depend from claim 84, and further in view of the recitation in each of those claims.

Claim 92 is directed to a messaging platform and recites *inter alia* "means for requesting from a master platform information corresponding to the service information" and well as "means for receiving the requested information from the master messaging platform in response to the master platform sending a request for information from an information source and receiving the requested information therefrom." As discussed above, Garson et al. does not teach or suggest any means for requesting information corresponding to service information from a master platform nor the master platform sending a request for information to an information source and receiving requested information therefrom. For at least these reasons, claim 92 is allowable over Garson et al. Claims 93-95 are also allowable in view of the fact that they depend from claim 92, and further in view of the recitation in each of those claims.

Claims 9-10, 40-41, and 70-71 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable by U.S. Patent Application No. 6,311,214 to Rhoads in combination with U.S. Patent Application No. 5,982,780 to Bohm et al. The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration. Page 6 of the Office Action contains a rejection based on the combination of Rhoads and Bohm et al. However, the detailed discussion of the rejection on pages 6-7 of the Office Action discusses the combination of Garson et al. and Bohm et al. Accordingly, it is believed that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 was intended to include the combination of Garson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,689,550) and Bohm et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,982,780).

The Office Action correctly states that Garson et al. does not explicitly disclose the use of debit amounts from a token pool and cites Bohm et al. as disclosing the use of "a token pool as a portion of the messaging network." The inapplicability of Garson et al. has already been discussed in detail above with respect to the independent claims. The combination of Bohm et al. and Garson et al. does not overcome this serious deficiency. With respect to claims 9, 10, 40, 41, 70, and 71, Bohm et al. does not teach or suggest the use of tokens as debit amounts or credit amounts in a token pool. Tokens are used in Bohm et al. in a manner similar to the known techniques in a token ring network. In a token ring network, the network station possessing the token has the right to transmit. The token is passed from one station to another as a means of regulating traffic on the network. Bohm et al. discloses a similar use in which a user request arrives at a node. The node requests tokens from the manager and locks tokens throughout the channel life-time. When the channel disconnect request is received, the tokens are returned to the manager. (See column 13, lines 19-25.) Thus, tokens are used in Bohm et al. as a means of regulating traffic flow.

In sharp contrast to the combination of Garson et al. and Bohm et al., claim 40 describes a process where tokens are used as a financial tool rather than a traffic regulating tool. Claim 40 recites a token pool for each messaging platform where each platform has an initial amount of tokens. The master platform is "configurable to debit a debit amount from a token pool of an originating message platform that requests delivery of a user message" as well as incrementing "a credit amount to a token pool of said remote messaging platform in response to the delivery of said user message." Thus, the claims of the present invention utilize tokens as a form of debiting or crediting messaging platforms for the receipt or delivery of messages. The tokens in the recited claims are totally unrelated to traffic regulation on the network. Bohm et al. does not teach or suggest the use of tokens in a monetary fashion, but merely describes tokens in a traffic regulating mechanism similar to a token ring network. The use of the word "tokens" in Bohm et al. is unrelated to the use of the work tokens in the claimed invention. Accordingly, claims 9, 10, 40, 41, 70, and 71 are clearly allowable over the combination Garson et al. and Bohm et al.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the subject application and its allowance are kindly requested. The applicants have made a good faith effort to place all claims in condition for allowance. If questions remain regarding the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (206) 628-7640.

Respectfully submitted,

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